

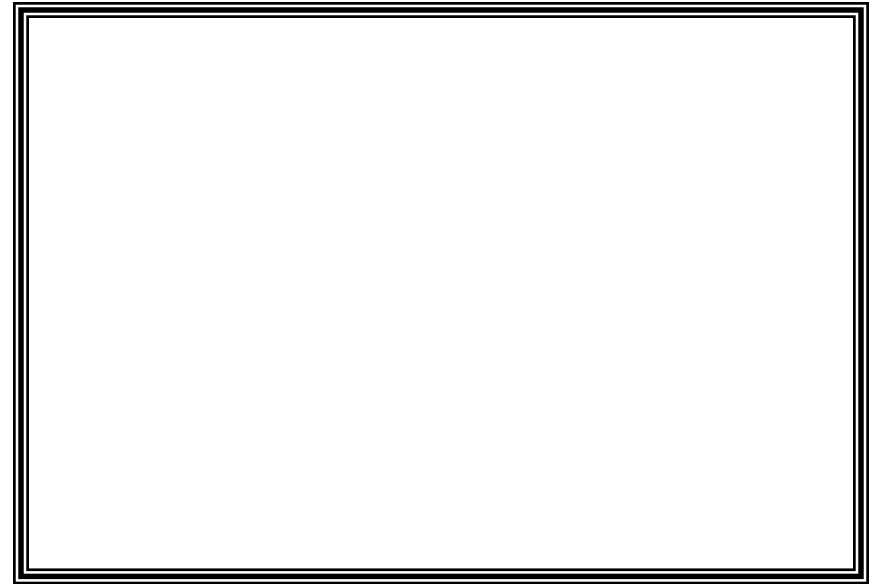
About the author...

Jacinta Behne lives in Castle Rock, Colorado. She works for Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), where she gets to create learning materials for young people. Dawn, a NASA mission that is traveling to the asteroid belt to study two asteroids: Vesta and Ceres, is one of the projects that she works on. Jacinta hopes that you will enjoy reading her story. She invites you to join her in creating your own illustrated book about the wonder of space exploration. Will you an *Aster's Hoity-Toity Belt* illustrator?

About the illustrator...

_____ lives in _____ .
_____ was _____ years old when this story was illustrated.
_____ 's favorite thing about drawing pictures for stories is _____ .
_____ hopes that when you read the story and look at the pictures, you will _____ .

_____ .



The Aster's Hoity-Toity Belt

Written by
Jacinta Behne, McREL

I Illustrated by

for
NASA's Dawn Mission

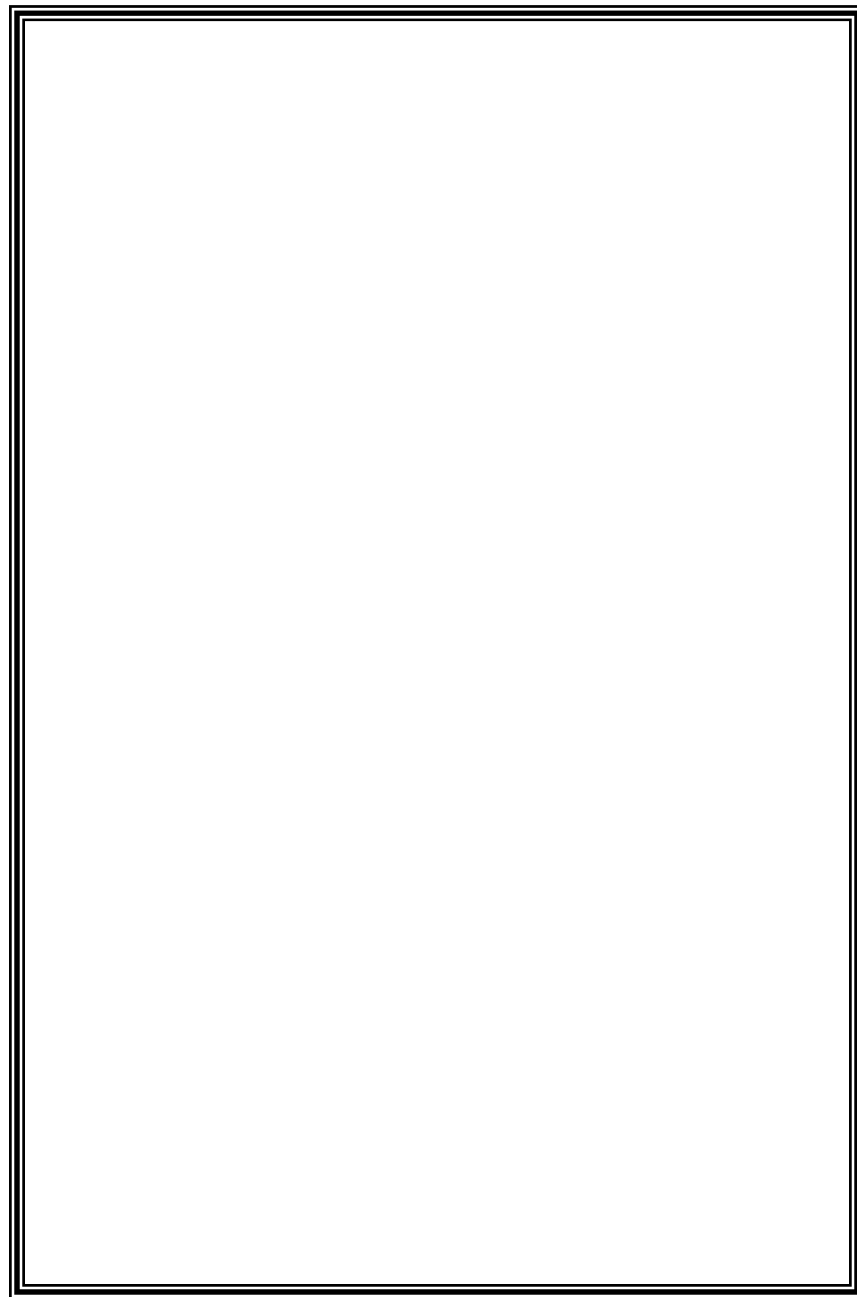
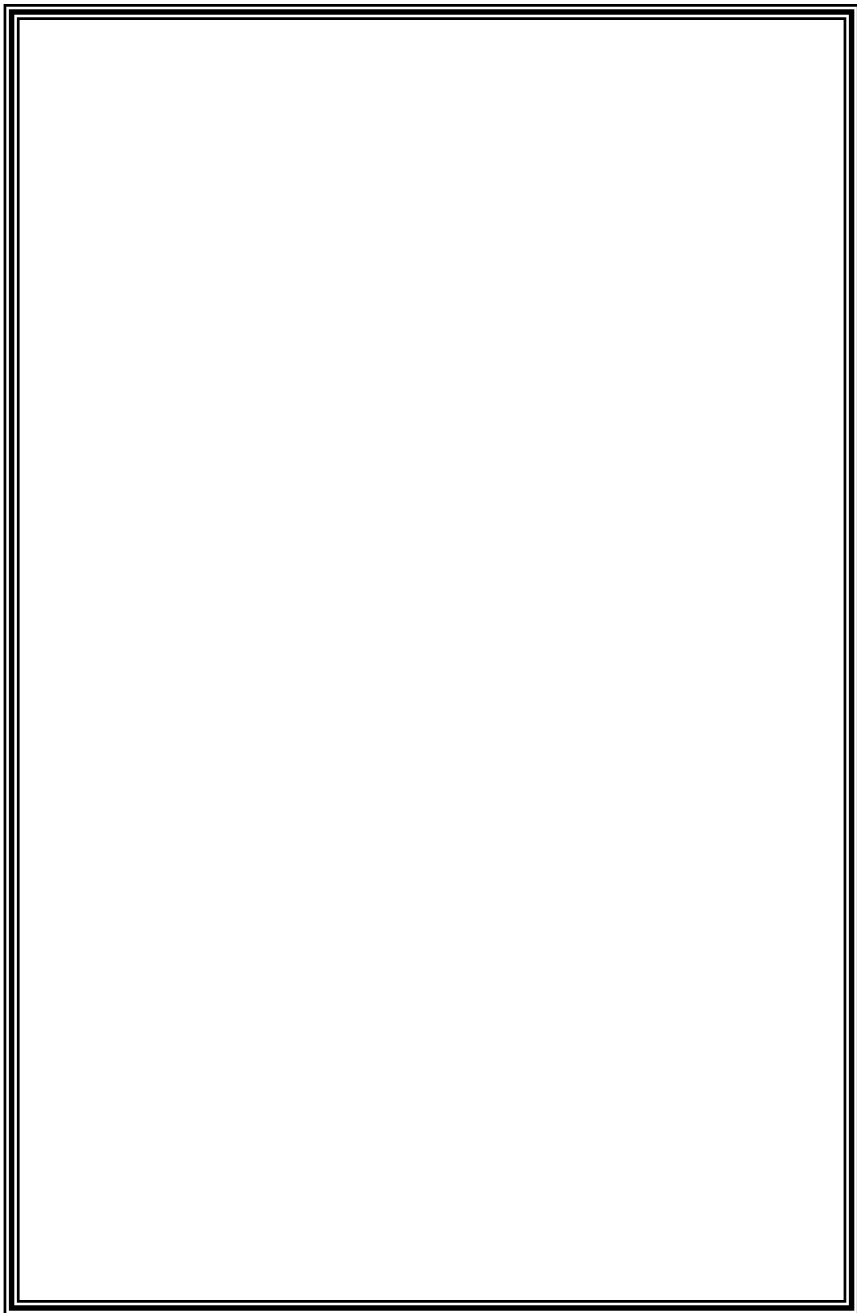
Once upon a time, in a magical place far, far away, there lived a great, noble family by the name of Aster. The Duke of Aster governed the realm, and as such, he looked over his family with great care and loving attention. The Duke especially loved the little ones, and was often heard to roar with laughter when one of them particularly tickled him. The Duchess of Aster was a very proper and genteel lady, who only wanted the very best for her family. As such, she was a bit more reserved, and sometimes scolded the Duke for being far too playful with the children. She thought that it wasn't a good idea for a nobleman to be seen frolicking with the children out in the sky space. Lady Aster said that it was important that the family receive the respect and admiration that they deserved in the larger Solar System family. After all, they were one of the oldest System families, and as giant families of rocks go, they were quite sizeable and imposing. And, to clearly certify their place in sky society, they were the inventors, the owners, and

Peace had come again to the great, noble family of Aster.

So, at the end of this journey, Dawn sent out a message far and wide that in that Great Carousel of the Sky, there once was "Aster's Hoity-Toity Belt," but that was a thing of the past. Today, the Asters are a close, loving family, and there is nothing hoity-toity about them. From that day on, no one ever called the Great Carousel or the Asters "hoity-toity."

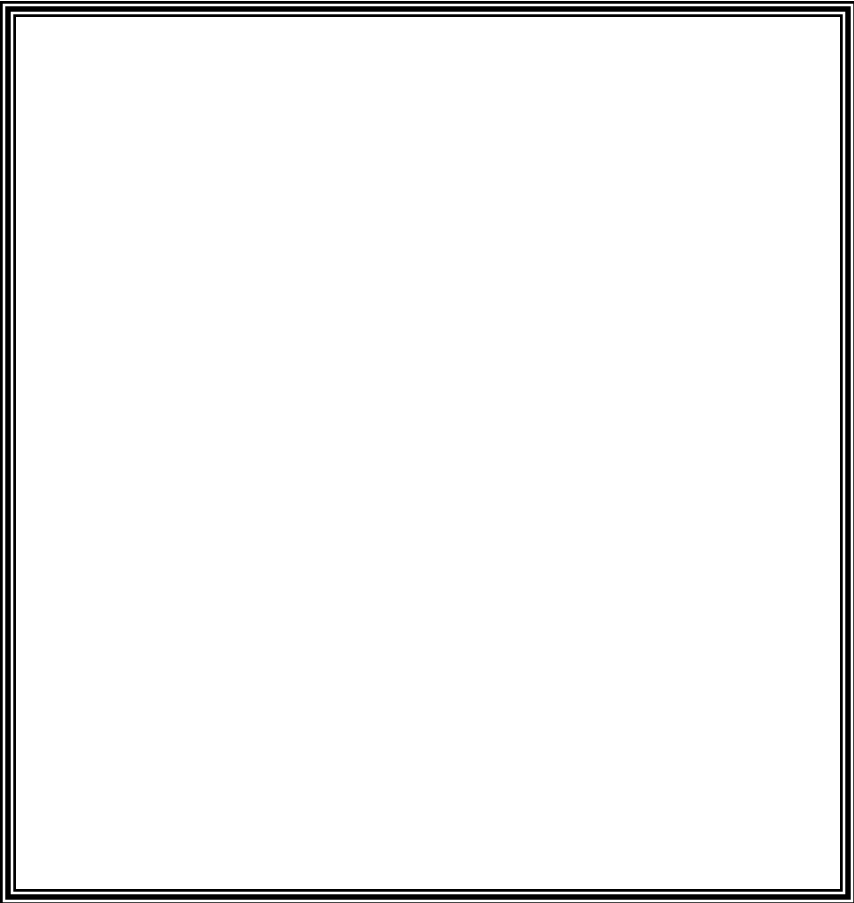
And that's how we've come to know what today we call the Asteroid Belt of our Solar System.

The End



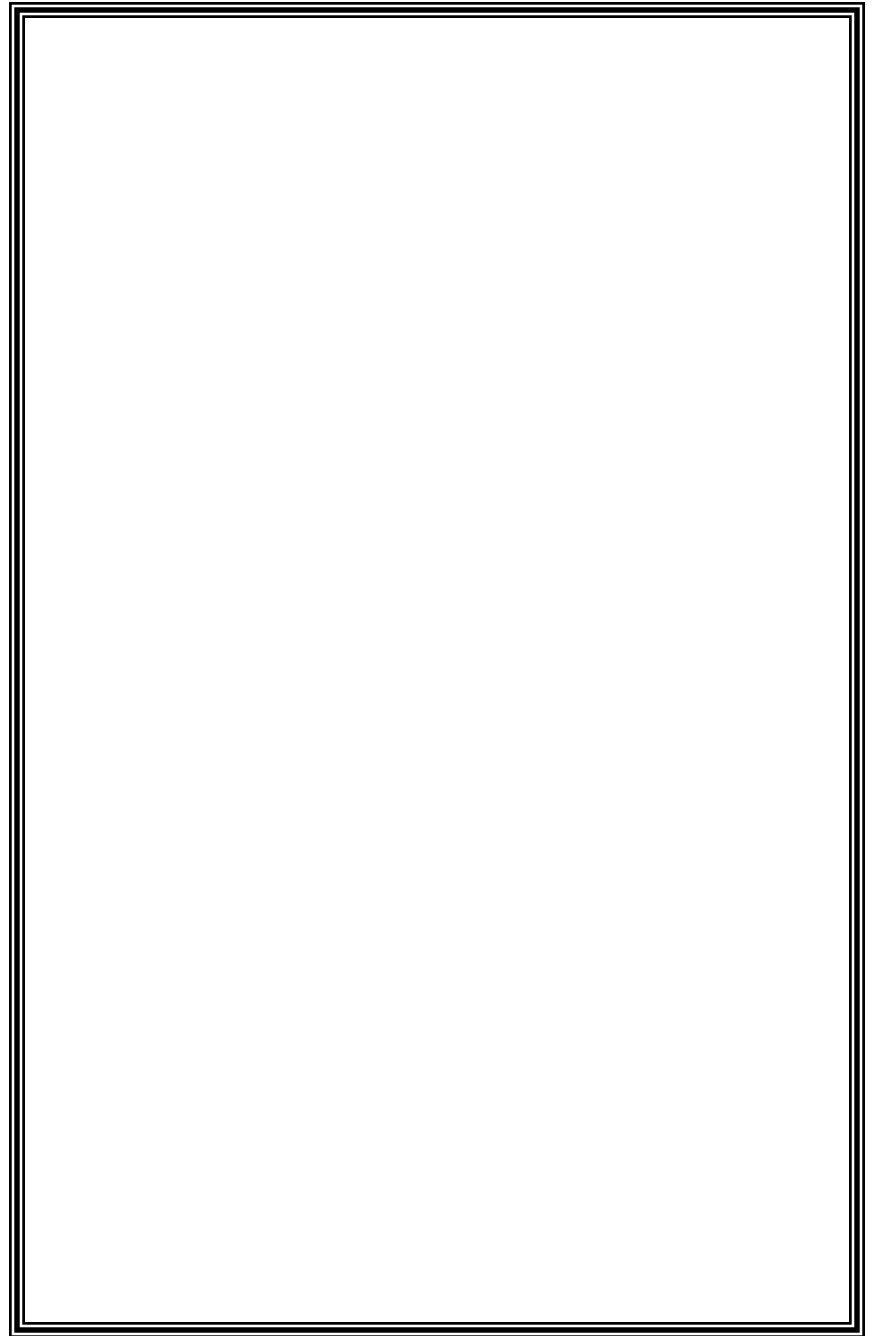
Not everyone who knew the Asters loved the Asters. Some folks thought they were a bit "hoity-toity" with their admitted nobility and their great Carousel, which some folks said "wasn't so great." It seems that the Asters were very, very picky about just who could ride on their Carousel, and not everyone in the Solar System family got to jump on and glide around and around, up and down. So it's been said that there were those who were stars, comets, and planets, who claimed that the circling, the up, the down, the dizzying around, the blinking lights, and the continued ringing melody, "just wasn't the greatest ride in the solar system." They said that they "didn't care at all" that the Asters seldom—almost never—let them ride. The Carousel "made them dizzy and sick to the pit of their stomach, in a spot right near their belt." Soon, the Great Carousel of the Skies came to be known as "The Aster's Hoity-Toity Belt."

Then came the day when Dawn had learned everything that she needed to know, and she bade the Asters farewell. She traveled on, this time propelling from the Aster's skyborhood to the far regions of the Aster's space in the Solar System. She traveled way out to the far regions of the Aster's realm. Dawn had a hunch she would find Ceres there, and there she found him. They sat and had a chat. Mostly, Ceres talked and Dawn listened. She learned that in some ways, the large Ceres was very different from little Vesta, and in other ways, they were somewhat alike. Most importantly, Dawn found out that Ceres was very happy in his new home, and Ceres was much relieved to learn that all was forgiven. He appreciated the request to return home, but in his mind, he was home. He had made some wonderful friends. Ceres decided to stay put, and promised never to forget the old skyborhood.



She was clearly made of the right stuff to find the giant Ceres and carry Vesta's message to him.

The Asters were hospitable and pleased to show their visitor around. They asked her not to hurry off, but to stay and visit a little while.

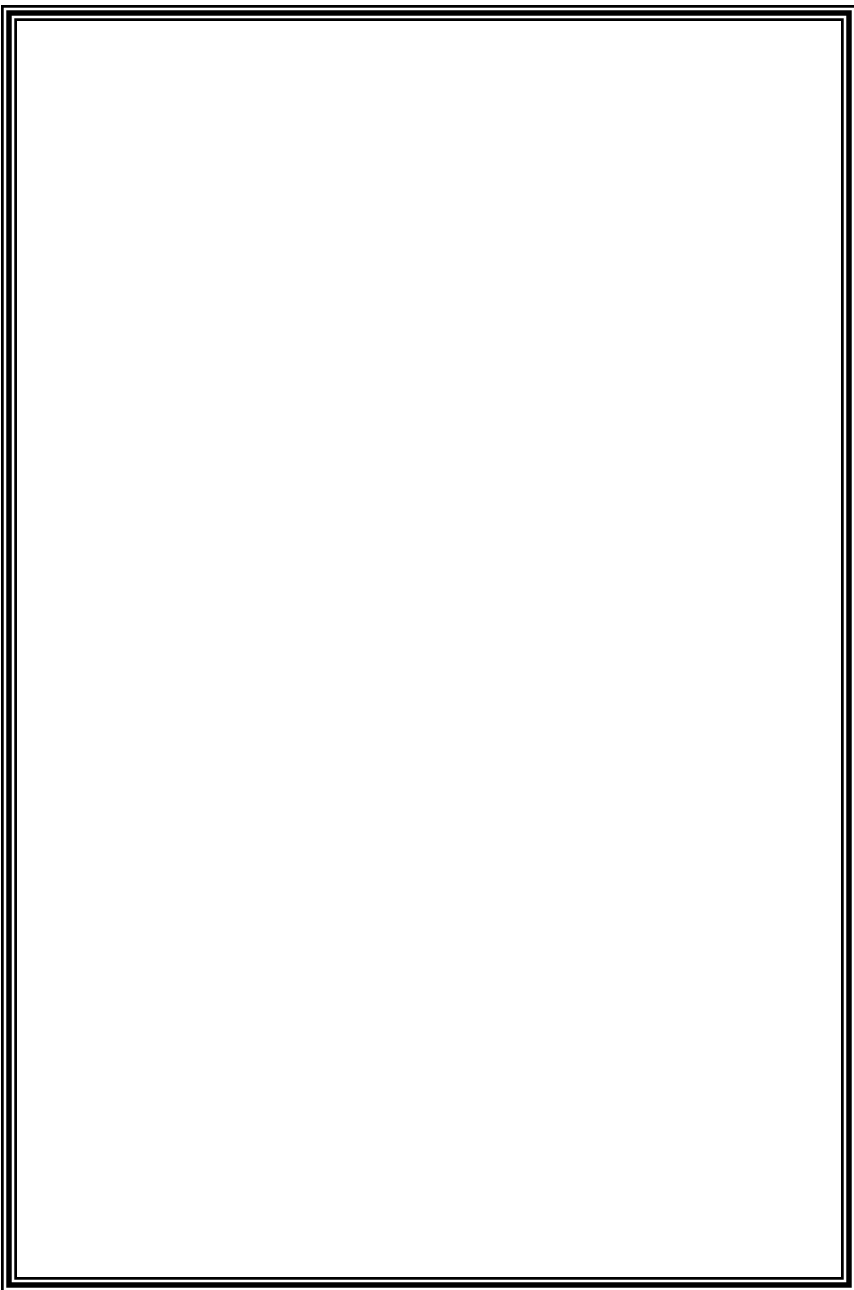


Well, when she heard this the Duchess was furious and wanted the Duke to call a meeting to defend their family's honor in the sky society. But the Duke was much too concerned with other things in their skyborhood, like keeping a watchful eye on his giant family—the young and the old alike. He was particularly concerned about two of the younger rocks who were forever competing with one another. They were only a few centuries apart in age, and as such, played a bit too rough with one another, teasing, scrapping, romping, and generally enjoying each other's company, ...well, ... MOST of the time. Sometimes, the young Vesta and Ceres were the best of friends. And sometimes, you would insist they were mortal enemies. The Duke thought part of it had to do with how big they were. Or in this case, how one of them was pretty big, and how one of them was pretty much NOT big.

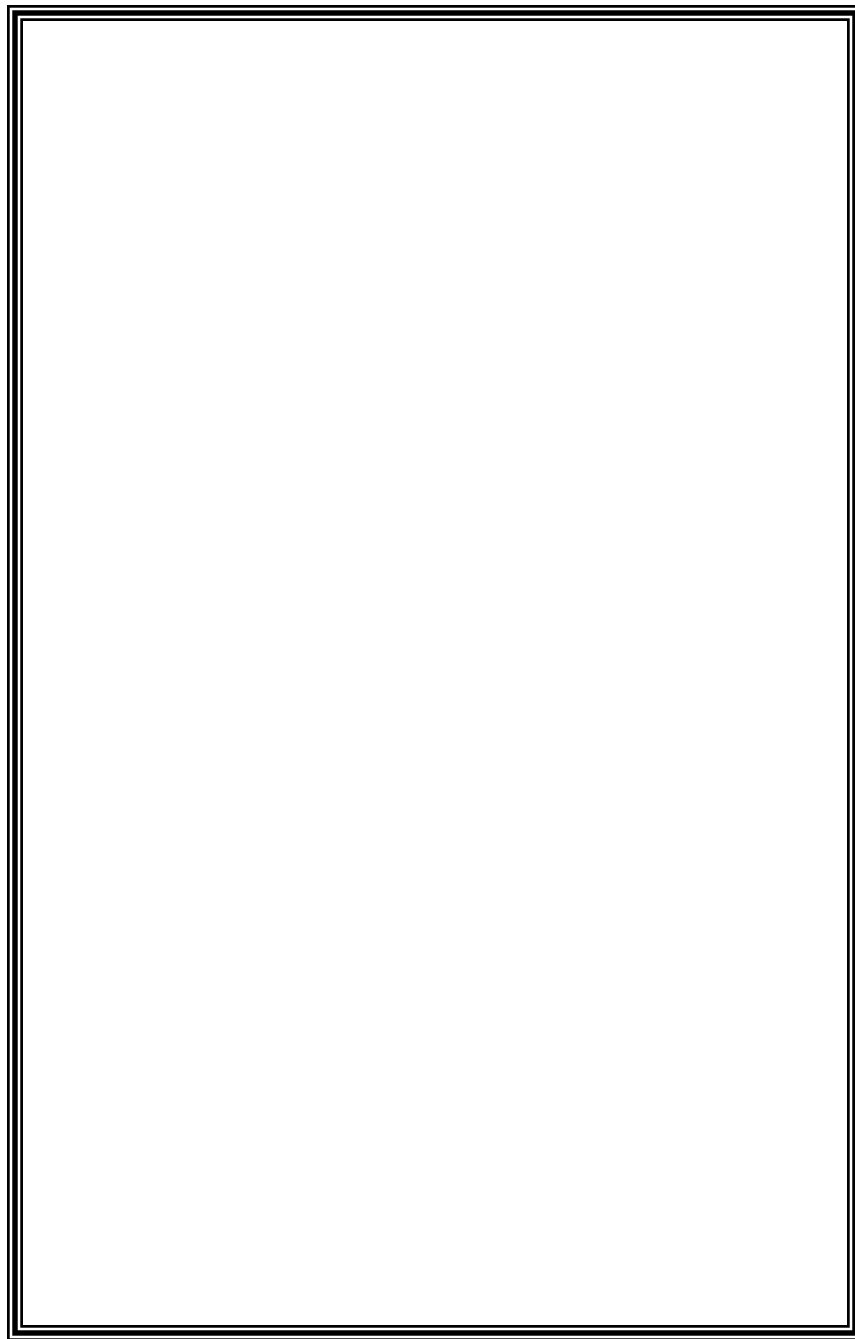
One day the Duke of Aster called a family meeting. He and Vesta had news to share. He had summoned a great Discovery courier from a distant Solar System planet called Earth. This explorer was known by the name of NASA Dawn, or Dawn for short. The Duke had offered her a challenge. Her mission was to find the lost Ceres and carry a message from Vesta to him. Vesta especially wanted Ceres to know that, "He is forgiven, and all is well. Would he please come home?"

Dawn returned the message. "Yes!" She "would come."

The appointed day arrived. In the distant skies, the Asters could see the great explorer, Dawn, approaching with ease and a steady pace. She was a lovely lady—a messenger with outstretched arms, ready to embrace those with whom she came in contact. Dawn met the Asters, and the Duke soon came to understand the reason for her importance in the Solar System. She was a great listener. Dawn listened long, and she listened hard. She made sure that she got the message right.



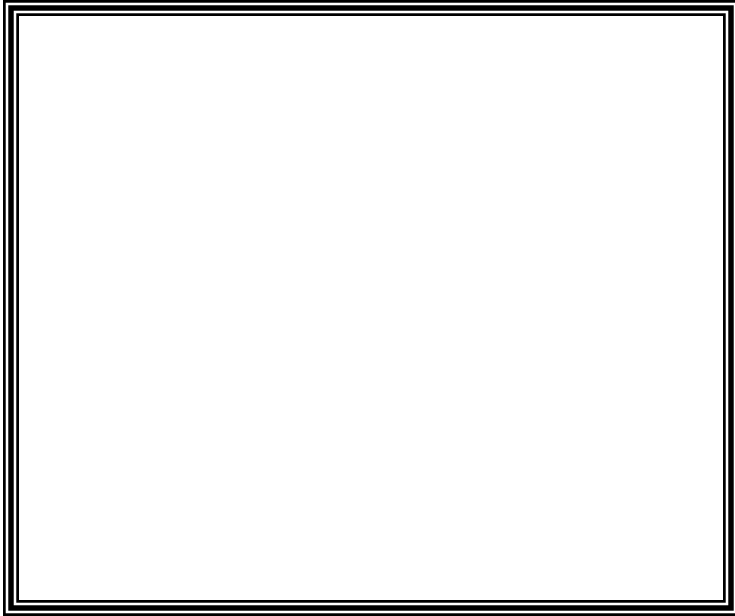
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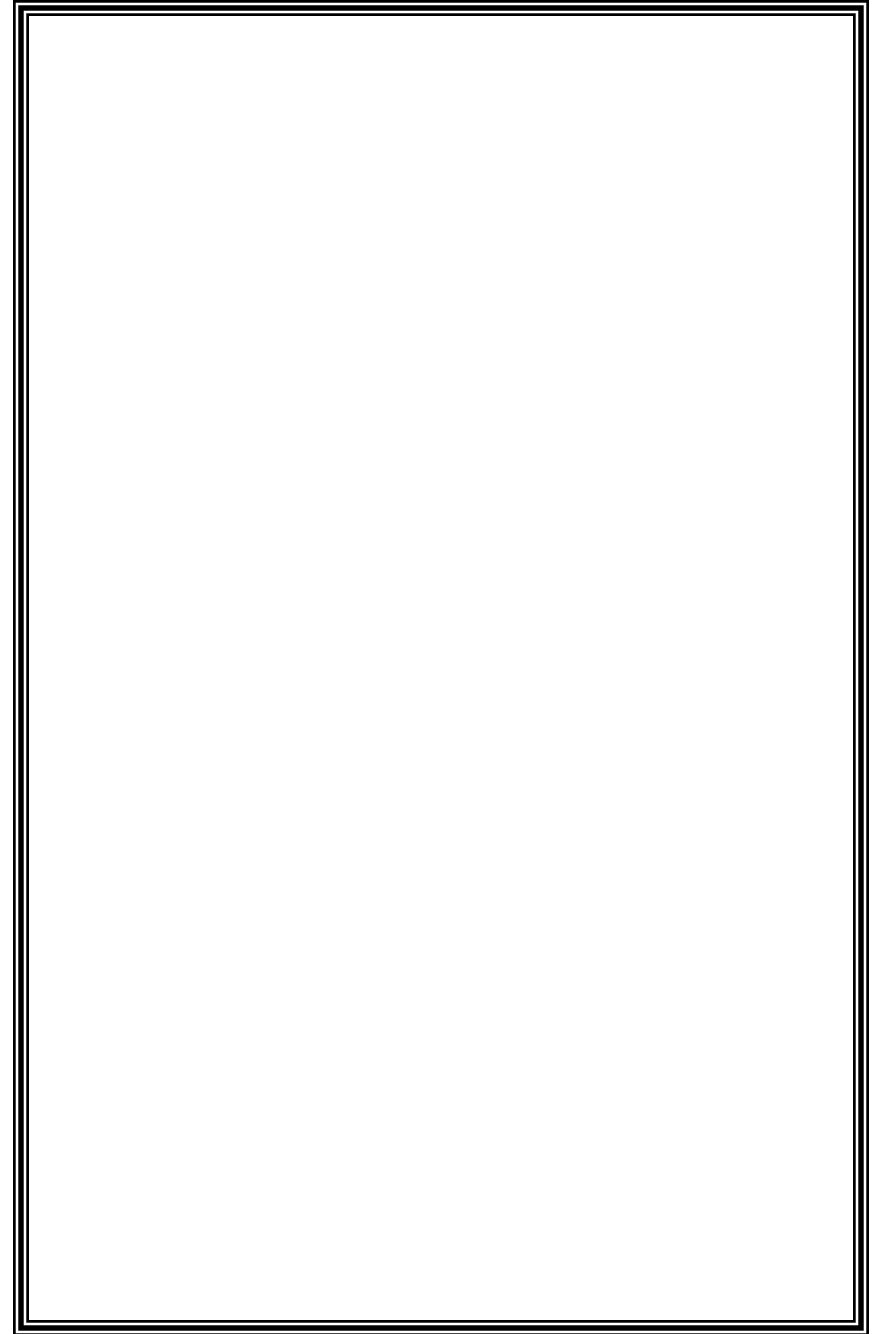
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Now, you would think that Vesta, who was the smaller of the two, would always give in to the much larger Ceres. But actually, little Vesta was often seen pushing, shoving, and generally being a nuisance. And it was Ceres who was far from scrappy. He was a gentle giant who loved his little friend Vesta, and often let her get the better of him. As the two friends grew older, Vesta would tease Ceres just for fun. She would egg him on, picking here, nudging there, ducking to the left, rolling to the right. Ceres pretended not to notice, as he truly didn't want to embarrass Vesta with a public fight right there in front of everyone in their skyborhood. Why, little Vesta wouldn't have a chance up against the brute strength of the giant Ceres. Well, that, and it turns out that the giant Ceres was a bit dull, and a bit afraid to join in with family games and family ways.

Of course, what Ceres didn't know was that long ago, Vesta had forgiven Ceres. Shucks, she didn't get hurt too badly when the great Carousel stopped. She had even decided that it was good for the family to stop and take a look at itself. For one thing, when the Carousel stopped and Vesta fell on her bottom, a giant crater formed. She decided that it was a good reminder not to be so scrappy, so pushy, and so generally feisty. Also, the Duke finally had a good, long talk with the Duchess, and she agreed that she was maybe just a little too worried about propriety and sky society, and not loving enough with her family. Since that time, she had been seen taking long walks and Carousel glides with her children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, and other family members in their skyborhood. Well, there were walks with everyone but Ceres, who by now, was missed by the entire family. "What had come of him? Where had he gone? Was he OK? Did he miss them too?"

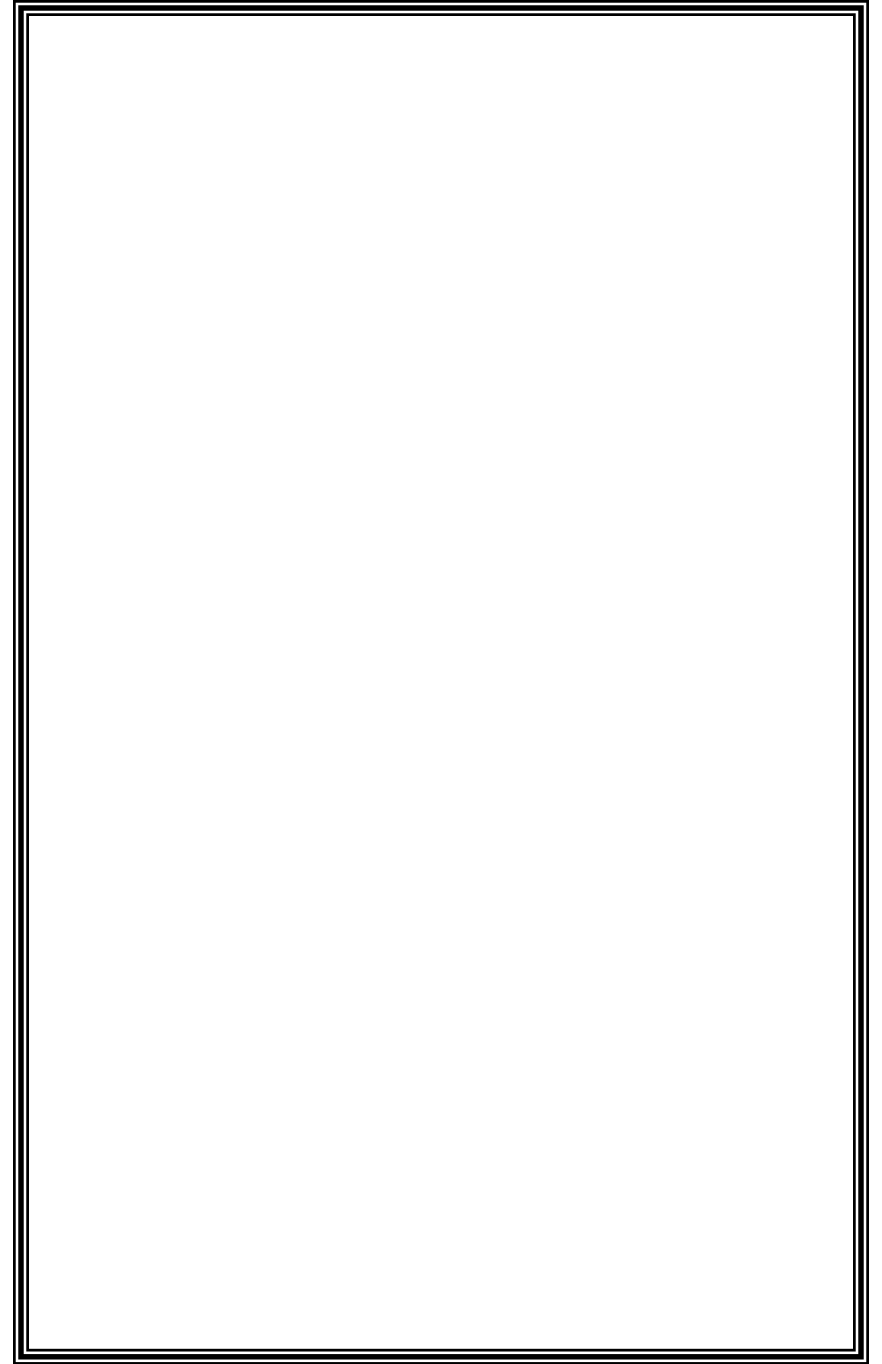


So, Ceres did the only thing that he could think of. He turned and ran. Ceres ran as fast as he could and he ran far—farther than he had ever been before, and far, far away from his little skyborhood. Ceres ran until he could no more. He found a quiet spot, and there he settled in, trying to blend in with the distant Asters—those whom he had never met before, and those who didn't know of the big, scary, awful mistake that he made. Years went by, and Ceres tried not to think of his old skyborhood, of the close-knit family, and of what he did to his once-good-friend, little Vesta.





The centuries passed, and although Vesta didn't grow very big, she grew very bright and quick. Ceres remained large, but he was far less bright. In their young adulthood, Vesta was fluid with motion, while Ceres just kind of dried up. In spite of her feistiness, the bright little Vesta was a favorite of all of the Asters. Ceres remained somewhat dull, and grew even more sensitive, sometimes thinking that no one loved him. And so it went for many hundreds of years.



"Ceres! Come out here this very moment!"
commanded the Duchess.

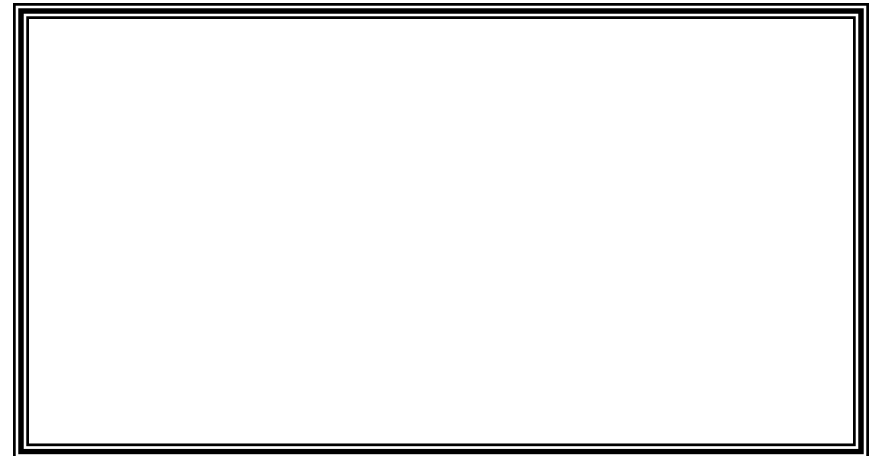
Ceres had succeeded in making lots of
Asters mad at him from time to time, mostly
because he was afraid to act, afraid to join
in, and generally afraid to stand out—up in
front of the others. But he had never
incurred the wrath of Lady Aster.

He peeked out from behind the great power
source. All of the Asters were standing
there in a circle, ...waiting, ...waiting,
...wondering. It was dark. There was no
playful music. The Carousel was quiet, and
Ceres was scared—very, very scared. He was
much too scared to step out in front of
everyone and face the fearsome Lady Aster.

Then one day, Ceres did the unthinkable.
Just as Vesta had climbed on to the Great
Carousel of the Skies, Ceres got a brilliant
idea. Why not stop the Carousel? With any
luck, Vesta would fall off! That would get
everyone laughing, and Vesta's bright honor
would surely be bruised. She might not be
the brilliant Vesta any longer.

It was a fantastic notion, Ceres thought. "I'll
do it! I'll stop the Great Carousel!"

And so, while the Carousel was whirling and
twirling, and Vesta and other Asters were
enjoying their circular whirl, Ceres snuck
around and underneath, where the great
power source lie, and did the unthinkable. He
pulled the great plug of power.



Immediately everything stopped and the Great Carousel came to a screeching halt. No ringing. No gliding. No lights. Nothing but one, giant stop! And yes, Vesta fell off, tumbling into some Asters who were hovering nearby. All of the Aster family gasped at once.

The Duke came running. "What ever in the sky had happened?"

M'Lady stormed in. "Of all that is right in the heavens, would someone please tell me what is going on?" she boomed.

All of the Asters were silent. The great Carousel was silent. The sky was silent. Well, except for the exceptionally sized Ceres, who could be heard chuckling from behind the great source of power.

The crowd stopped. They all turned and looked his way. They knew that Ceres-sized chuckle.

